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IMPROVEMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES IN YUNNAN

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Considerable work has been done since liberation to improve rail transport in Yunnan Province. The inferior quality of the early railway construction has been eliminated, and the maintenance and repair of rolling stock and construction equipment has been markedly improved. Compared with 1950, the efficiency of railway workers has been raised 111 percent. The volume of rail transport has been increased by 230 percent; the cost has been reduced to 73.8 percent of what it was. As for financial operations, a loss has been converted into a gain.

For motor vehicle transport, 12 highway routes have been built. The trafficable length of these highways is now five times as great as at the time of liberation. The number of motor vehicles now operated by state-operated companies is 3.11 times what it was in 1950; the efficiency of operation is greater by 169.7 percent, the volume of transportation has increased by 747 percent; and the cost has been reduced by 25.91 percent. There has been great improvement in management and operating efficiency of privately owned and operated motor transport companies, since the Five Antis movement, the rational organization of the sources of supplies, the standardization of charges, and the allocation of vehicles, all under the direction of the state-owned supervisory agencies.

The reform and reorganization of the various privately owned transport facilities is a serious and complex problem. Within the past 3 years, this problem has been dealt with in various ways. The special districts and Hsiens have organized through transport companies, such as in the Chao-t'ung Special Administrative District; or through transport agencies, as in Hao-ch'ing Hsien; or transport commands, as in the Ssu-mao district; or mass transport stations, as at Hsia-kuan and other places; or mass transport management offices as at Pao-shan. Owners of horse, mule, cow, or bullock carts, caravans, and small boats, have organized themselves into self-help transport teams. These backward means of transport have served as an auxiliary to the modern means of transport.

In the first half of 1952, these backward means of transport moved 63 percent of all the grain that was transported. In 1953, from January to October, the 41 self-help transport teams in Hao-ch'ing Hsien hauled 6,300,000 chin [one chin equals 2.2 pounds] of goods. The companies of primitive teamsters under the transport commands in Ssu-mao district hauled 10 million chin of cargo; and many other examples could be mentioned. These means of transport not only contributed to the growth of production in agriculture and industry, but also to national defense, through promoting solidarity among the different tribes people by hauling their products to market and by bringing back Chinese-manufactured products from the other parts of the country. This unquestionably results in strengthening our border regions.

The 5-year economic plans of the government require that our transportation facilities keep abreast of the rapidly growing need of transportation for the urban-rural exchange of manufactured goods and agricultural commodities and minerals, for drawing the people of the frontier districts more closely into the economic life of the rest of the country, and for making possible the military defense of the international borders. Therefore, we must press forward the work of providing improved and more adequate means of transport.

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With regard to the industrial production of the province, in 1953, the various principal industrial products (1950 as 100) were: tin 242, coal 148, iron 271, and salt 293. Other articles, such as yarn, cloth, sugar, and paper, were produced in quantities that at least equalled the production targets. With the constant growth of production in a country of socialized industry, our transportation capacity must be substantially increased.

The recovery and growth of agricultural production throughout the province has been rapid. Since 1950, grain production has increased 27.47 percent, cotton 266.66 percent, dried tobacco leaves 205.58 percent, sugar cane 56.47 percent. Other products also showed increases. These rates of increase are likely to rise year by year. Accompanying the increases in agricultural production, the purchasing power of the farmers has become progressively greater; thus, taking 1950 as 100, in 1953 it was 179. Also with 1950 as the basis, the 1953 volume of retail sales of cotton cloth was 726, of matches 437, of table salt 145, and of edible oils 904. The requirements of agricultural implements, fertilizers, etc., have increased year by year.

All of these increases have been reflected in the growth in volume of transportation handled by state-owned companies. Based on 1950 as 100, for 1951 the volume was 380, for 1952 it was 663, for 1953 it was 1,817. But even this was far from meeting the needs. In Yunnan Province, 45.5 percent of the hsien cities still cannot be reached and served by motor vehicles. In some cases, a special commissioner required up to 15 days travel to reach a hsien city that is under his jurisdiction; and a hsien official sometimes needs 6 or 7 days to reach points under his jurisdiction. Charges for freight transportation by rail in Yunnan are 150 percent higher than in the rest of the country, and for passengers, 50 percent higher. The number of motor vehicles in the province is not only inadequate for the needs, but those operated by state-owned companies are run at from one-half to one-third efficiency.

With respect to transportation by private parties, according to the figures for the Ta-li Special District, it has doubled in volume since liberation. Incomplete figures for the province as a whole show that of those who make a special business of transportation, there are 3,064 horse carts, 973 bullock carts, 41,458 pack horses, 1,326 pack bullocks, 110 hand carts, some small wooden boats, and an uncounted number of human pack carriers. To these must be added the facilities of those for whom transportation is only a secondary occupation.

However, without organization or direction, all of these private transport facilities cannot play a significant part in the transportation plans of the government. For instance, in one rural subdivision of Yung-p'ing Hsien at the time of liberation there were only 300 pack horses; during the past 3 years, by a rather aimless growth, the number has grown to 1,600 pack horses. There has been no uniformity of transport charges in the various districts. For example, taking the scale of charges of Pao-shan Special Administrative District as 100; the charges in the neighboring district of Ta-li were 160, but in the adjoining district of Li-chiang the charges were only 71.8. The highest scale of charges was 210 in Ssu-mao district.

This illustrates one of the weakest features of our transport system in Yunnan. What we need to do is to promote socialized transport capacity, and reform the nonsocialized transport capacity. We should continue plans to develop means and methods of transport toward the international frontier. Our immediate duty is to make the most of what we have.

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As for the state-operated transportation network, reforms should be made in the operation, maintenance, and repair of motor vehicles and in the backward methods of traffic management. This will depend to a large extent on party organization and political work. Bureaucratism and subjectivism must be eliminated, and especially the old capitalistic methods of management; and socialized methods must be studied and put into practice. Scope should be given to the natural ingenuity and interest of the workers themselves, while improving discipline and revolutionary vigilance. Measures should be taken to control or put a stop to the common practice in certain quarters, whether official agencies or enterprises, of improperly retaining monopolistic control of all motor vehicles whether or not they are needed. The extension of highways into regions inhabited by various tribal peoples confers not only an economic benefit, but also has political and military significance. In the past we have been eager to build new roads, but we have been remiss in keeping them in good condition. We should cultivate an interest on the part of the users in the repair and maintenance of the roads, particularly of the bridges.

Twenty-six percent of the privately owned transport facilities are operated by individual owners. These men should consider organizing cooperative societies among themselves for mutual assistance. It would be well for the others to enter into joint operation arrangements with the state-owned transport companies, or unite into a number of companies which will in turn become parts of public-private joint transport companies. Thus their deficiencies may be remedied through the direction and assistance of the technically more advanced and experienced official and business operators. The privately owned means of transport may gradually be absorbed into the national system of socialized transportation, and the best way to do this is through cooperative organization.

Unregulated charges for transport is another matter that needs to be abolished. It is a product and evidence of the free enterprise system and it results in diverse fluctuating prices of goods and services. Charges should be adjusted by taking into account the cost of production, transport, and marketing; and they should be determined by united action of the concerns engaged in motor transport on the highways; and when settled, this scale of charges should be generally observed. Ignorant or unscrupulous persons that raise charges or the prices of goods on the pretext of higher transportation costs should be educated or disciplined.

Much remains to be done in organizing, directing, regulating, and improving the business of transportation in this border province. For this it will be necessary to look to the party organization to effect the understanding of the problems involved on the part of all concerned. Our objective must be willing cooperation for the benefit of everybody, unity between the general population and the tribes people, and the strengthening of the national defense.

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